



two men, who wanted to occupy the king's throne, arrested him. The king said, "My banner people do not believe easily. They are serious. They do not believe that I can be arrested by two men. Let me give you a note that I am well." The two men accepted this offer.

This letter he wrote, however, stated: "I have a blue vault over me and a green silken lawn under me and ten men supporting me at my back. I always have two milk skins of milk and plenty of mutton. I live happily. Please drive horned animals before you. Drive hornless animals behind you, and fold your white hare. There are two aspens. You do not fell these aspens. They are local spirits. Hew one of these in the middle of locality. Our local spirits will chase after them. Please come here by using one of these as fuel. Nobody can understand this letter. Do not show it to anyone. There is a black silken file at my son's feet. My daughter-in-law knows it. Let her find this file. She can file the lock and open the chest and then see what is inside of it."

The two men came and showed the letter. Those who saw this letter believed that the place where the king was was very nice. Some even wanted to move there. But the daughter-in-law asked to see the letter. After she did she spoke before the audience and deciphered the real meaning of the letter.

"My dear audience, you believed that my father-in-law is living happily. As I understood, some of you even wanted to move there. Indeed my father-in-law is not living happily. His blue vault above him means space. Green lawn under him means green grass. His ten men supported my back means that his arms were pinioned on his back with straps. Drive horned animals before you means that those who have guns and spears go in the front; and drive hornless animals behind means that

people with no guns go behind those with guns. Staggered red stark means the prince. Keep a black hare means to go in the night. Keep the white hare to conceal a day. The two local aspens mean these two messengers. Hew one and make another a fuel means one should be killed and another should be made as a guide.

As the daughter-in-law of the king said, the subjects of the king did. They rescued their king by killing enemies and occupying the territory. After many years king became senile. He needed to transfer his throne to his son; but the prince was stupid. The king was anxious about the stupidity of his son. Even though the daughter-in-law could not succeed the king, she was genuinely witty. The king considered a way to transfer his power to his daughter-in-law. So he quizzed his daughter-in-law.

The king called on her and said, "You should compose a sentence that does not use the words arag (pannier), sawar (cane gatherer of dung), aduu (horse), khomool (pellets), honi (sheep), huts (ram), chono (wolf), gol (river), mod (tree) nor idekh (to eat), but this sentence should inevitably need these words. The king gave her a pannier, a dung-gatherer to collect horse's manure. In the meantime, a wolf came to the flock of sheep and caught a ram and dragged it over the stream and ate it. The daughter-in-law of the king had to report it without using real proper names.

She said, "When I carried an interlaced basket over my back and held a curved wooden hand and gathered runner's waste, a howler appeared and apprehended the father of the bleaters. It forded the current and guzzled it near the tallest plant." The king was very glad and amazed at her wit and gave his throne to her. Then they lived happily ever after.

• HUMOROUS TALES

The humorous tales are often full of parody and humorous devices.

The Pudgy Boy who Rode a Stumpy Yearling Colt

Once upon a time during the Manchu period a nobleman assailed the common people with insults. There was a pudgy boy, riding a stumpy yearling colt, galloping along the rutty road with his whip. The boy saw a field mouse whisk straight into its burrow. The boy stopped and dismounted from his yearling colt and started digging and smoking out the burrow.

But then the king's horseman, with a furry overcoat made of goatskin and riding on a black stallion, came and asked, "What are you doing?" The boy answered that a field mouse had whisked into the burrow. "Now I am digging and smoking the burrow." The horseman said, "You, who uttered the witty words. Heaven may strike you with lightning." The boy answered, "Heaven might strike you who are riding the stallions and striking them with their thick crest. It may spare me, who is orphaned."

The horseman were enraged by this and wanted to inform

it to his nobleman. But the nobleman was not at home. Then he told the nobleman's wife about the boy. The wife sent out a messenger to bring him. The boy said, "The head of a goat is less respectable at the sacrifice. The head of a camel is too big to place on a tub. The fatty wife is not entitled to become involved in a suit. The head of a sheep can be placed at the sacrifice. I can be punished by the nobleman who is entitled to penalize."

The boy was stripped of his clothing and then hitched to a horse-hitching pole. He shuddered with cold. The doctor of the nobleman came and asked, "Why are you here?" The boy answered, "I am picking the doctor's thumb, a writer's pointing-finger, and the dry skull of clergyman." But the nobleman came and asked, "Why is he hitched." The boy said that he argued with a nobleman's horseman and the nobleman's wife and explained his arguments. The nobleman said that boy was correct.